



## HE CAME FOR THE LOST

March 2019

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.*

Luke 19:5-6

The Bible tells us that Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. Wealthy—almost certainly because he had cheated so many out of their money.

I’ve been trying to picture what Zacchaeus might be like were we to meet him. The Bible doesn’t go into such details, but I’d like to imagine nevertheless.

He was small in stature—maybe with a crooked back from bending over accounts day after day. He would have been looked down on by those with greater height—those who were upright in appearance and spirit. The smile on his face had long ago left him. After all, smiles are for

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people with friends—for those who love and are loved—not corrupt tax collectors. Smiles are for people who have joy to offer to those around them.

A big crowd had gathered to see Jesus, the rabbi who Zacchaeus had been hearing about. Unable to see overtop of everyone, he forgot all dignity and climbed up a nearby tree to get a better view. He had never felt as eager to see anyone as he was at this moment. Who is this person and what makes him so special?

I think he felt his lacking, sensed his need, longed for the love he had heard Jesus promised. This longing was not new to him. What a surprise it was then, that out of the many people there, Jesus looked up and called *his* name: *“Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”*

Again forgetting all sense of dignity, he scrambled down the tree, meeting Jesus and bringing him to his home. The rest is history, though here again, the Bible doesn’t go into detail about what happened there. Something changed in him. He told Jesus, *“Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”* (Luke 19:8)

This is the Jesus I know. I’ve come to see how often those who are most precious to him are the ones the world has turned its back on, those who have been excluded or disliked for some reason. He listens to what’s in their heart, feels their pain, is in tune with their loneliness. He lets them know they’re loved.

Have you ever felt you’re not appreciated or understood? Not a part of the world as others are?

Jesus seeks out those who feel that way. He loves us and wants us to know that. He will help us see the beauty we have inside.

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